



Tuniqtaviniit [Artéfact] : Inuit art as an image of architecture, the land as a place of learning

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Collaborators : Inukjuak community



Together : Pavilion located in the heart of the village on the site of the current school.

// SHORT SUMMARY

This essay (project) focuses on Inuit art as an image of northern architecture. He wonders: how can the built environment support cultural practices from yesterday to today? The school is positioned at the center of tugging and identity quest, it proposes the creation of cultural revaluation workshops a local organized in the village of Inukjuak and on the territory for the youth of the community.

By establishing a harmony between tradition and modernity, and reconnecting the territory to education, we succeed in supporting cultural identity. In the words of Frederic Laugrand: « *Pour les Inuit, il est évident que la toundra plus que la communauté surpeuplée restera pour longtemps encore le lieu de socialisation, d'initiation et de ressourcement par excellence.* » (Laugrand, 2008 ; 96)

Using the land as a place of learning is a solution explored by this essay (project).



// OBJECTIVES AND CHALLENGE

Traditional and contemporary cultural practices are at the heart of this research-creation. Thus the mission of the proposed project is to support the sharing and dissemination of knowledge within a community. How can architecture contribute to establishing a harmony between two cultures bearing this new Inuit identity? The architectural project is developing considering three important objectives: the socio-cultural component, the relationship with the territory and the formal expression of architecture. The project proposes, in complementarity with the existing school, to create a network of apprenticeship workshops where the elders and the youth of the community will be able to exchange, share and learn different cultural practices by combining Inuit and Western traditions. The different pavilions relate the context on which it is implanted with the type of activity proposed to the program.

- Create identity sites that keep their cultural practices and the activities that flow from them.
- Integrate architecture with landscape through its materiality and organic forms.
- Develop an architecture adaptable to the geographical situation of each pavilion and to favorise the local workforce.
- Create different safe spaces for young people and foster the spirit of sharing by creating different community centers.
- Develop a network of cultural pavilions in the territory and near the village that reflects the cultural aspirations of Inuit youth and development criteria that could serve as a starting point for broader reflection on this type of program.
- Propose a hybrid architecture between traditional Inuit culture and contemporary southern culture.

// CONTEXTES ET COLLABORATEURS

A year ago, I took part in the construction and design workshop run by Mrs. Myriam Blais. With my colleagues from the workshop, I had the opportunity to visit two villages in Nunavik : Puvurnituq and Inukjuak. It was in this moment in the village of Inukjuak that I realise the special attachment of the Inuit have toward their territory. So I was able to put myself in the spirit of the place in addition to meeting beautiful young people in the community that allowed me to understand the complexity of issues related to education.

As Inukjuak is currently planning to build a new school, I had the opportunity to discuss with Mayor Pauloosie J. Kasudluak the various issues of the current school but also the goals for the future project. I had the opportunity to talk to several young Inuit from Nunavik communities about their aspirations and their daily life among them, the young Aqearuk Inukpuk from Inukjuak met at Innalik School.

// RÉSULTATS ET SOLUTIONS

It is in order to create interactive and practical workshops where the talent of young people is implemented and where it incorporates the concepts learned in everyday life that the program has been established. By raising traditional knowledge, one can create different workshops directly related to the community. Five pavilions were developed in the project.



Together :

It is at the front of the school, in the heart of the village, that the rallyer is positioned. In the center of the courtyard, the pavilion makes it possible to separate into two distinct areas the public space where young and old can have fun as well as the circulation space where motorized transportation meets at rush hour. Then, the use of a fluid element that accompanies the circulation route connects the three buildings that make up the pavilion. This pedestrian crossing is also raised to allow a safe walk for students of the school. Then, from a cultural level, the rally brings to light the spirit of sharing within a community. As a result, three functions make up the building and testify to this very important value for the Inuit: the community freezer, the production space and finally the collective kitchen.

The community freezer already present in the village is a strong symbol of sharing within each community. It is during the return of a hunting or fishing trip that surplus catches are deposited in the freezer so that other families in the village can stock freely. Since the main function of the pavilion is a communal kitchen, some of the reserves could be kept on the school site so that young people can use them during cooking workshops where traditional foods are taught. A fruit and vegetable production area is also integrated into the pavilion. Although it is not in the cultural habits of the community probably because of their high cost in the store, it would be interesting to show young people how to grow these foods in northern environment by taking advantage of some prototypes already in place in Nunavik for example, the Growing North Project (<https://www.grownorth.ca/>) in Nunavut. This greenhouse also helps to create harmony between the two cultures and to take advantage of each one. The collective kitchen, the central element of the pavilion, is the very space where the sharing of knowledge and meals takes place. The circular space allows to continue the cultural practices associated with meal times. Set back from this space, there is the kitchen as such where young people will cook meals. The idea of a warmer place and open to the community then comes to justify the wood as the building's main materials and its large fenestration.

In short, Together is a meeting place where young people can cook traditional food for the community and learn more about fruit and vegetable production.



Meeting point



In between



The explorer

Located a few kilometers from the village, the explorer follows the natural topography of the rocky capes. In mineral appearance, it is one with the Nordic landscape. This pavilion offers workshops for young Inuit to live out of the land. Thus, the pavilion offers two different learning spaces. The first, located upstream of the rocky cape, offers an exterior layout allowing to be connected directly with the landscape. The second space as for him, is in a way like a refuge after the long days of exploration. Protected and heated by a backup system, it allows young people to rest. In addition to territorial knowledge, games, dances and Inuktitut are also favored in this building, which are important traditional practices during expedition. The spatial qualities of the closed volume are numerous. Several points of view frame specific elements of the landscape. Its delicate insertion into the landscape is also felt inside as the rocky cape itself is an integral part of the building.

In response to the desire of the young people to return to their roots, the explorer offers a place away from the village allowing students to reconnect with their territorial heritage through survival workshops on the land.



In the landscape

Inside the pavilion

The creative

Closed to the village, in the bay, you can see the creative from afar. This pavilion provides spaces for artistic expression for the youth of the community. Built entirely of mud brick, some parts are covered with plaster to allow artists to decide its character. Thus, the function of the building is dictated by its artistic appearance. It acts as a white canvas evolving to the rhythms of time.

The creative is composed of three separate volumes. The main volume where there is a collective workshop, as well as an exhibition area. Artists can create the drawings, but also make the prints. Secondary buildings are also placed on the site punctually to create more intimate workshops for those who feel the need. As a result, we can very well imagine multiplying the small individual workshops throughout the village, but also on the more remote territory to benefit a maximum of people.



Inuit art being a source of pride for this Aboriginal community, it was self-evident that integrating places of creation enhances this contemporary cultural practice.



Art in the land



Creative space

The nomad

It is on the shoreline of the Innuksuac River in the older part of the village that the nomad is positioned. In very close relation with the water, the nomad evolves at the rhythm of the seasons and the tides. In summer, its function of kayak workshop is in adequacy with the river and the traditional fishing techniques. In winter, when the water transform as ice, it can serve as a transition point for winter activities such as hockey games. The function of the different spaces of the building was thought according to the sequence of construction of the kayak and the teaching methods that is to say: the observation; the reproduction of the techniques taught and the experimentation in real time. The materiality of each space is also chosen according to the function that houses it.

At first, the informal learning space, double height, in earthenware, is positioned in the center of the building. This circular place is conducive to learning using traditional methods or observation, imitation and experimentation at the pace of each. Thus, the demonstration is at the center of all. After observing the teacher, students are encouraged to reproduce the steps demonstrated earlier on their own kayak in the workshop attached to it. Its wooden structure and its materiality recall that of the object in question. Although kayaks were once made from seal skin and game bones, using traditional construction techniques using modern materials is an example of old and new harmony between Quallunaat and Inuit. The workshop can also open on the outside, towards the river so that young people can go directly to experience the result of their construction on the river itself. When the tide goes up, the water approaches the building, making access easier. The third space attached to the workshop is the hangar, the storage space for kayaks after the expedition on the water. In some places, kayaks can be hung from the walls of the building. The use of the different construction systems and materials used evokes the mission of the project to strike a balance between tradition and modernity. We are talking about a hybrid architecture adapted to its context and function.



Finally, the nomad, a hands-on workshop, allows young people in the community to learn more about constructive techniques, but also about traditional fishing methods.



Close to the river

The workshop

the solitary

Located on the other side of the shore, the solitary catches our attention. With his imposing presence due to materiality and his high-level signage, the pavilion seems to have been watching over the community. Then, it is by looking at the solitary of the village that we can recognize the silhouette of the piercing eyes of an owl. This pavilion serves as an anchor for young people during adventures. The building includes outdoor gathering spaces where young people can make fires, an activity that was raised during exchanges with them. We can very well imagine the solitary shine of light during friendly meetings. Then, there is also a protected area for colder days. The two spaces are arranged so as to frame views of the village and the landscape that surrounds it. Thus, its mineral materiality is integrated into the rather rocky environment of the context.

Finally, this pavilion is a small landmark in the landscape. During expeditions with friends, this pavilion serves as a stopping point where young people can get together.



On the other side

Center the landscape

To conclude, the essay (project) is part of a different formal approach by questioning the contribution of Inuit art to architecture to support cultural identity. Thus, this project proposes to rethink the places of learning so that they are more in touch with his territory and the cultural practices of the Inukjuak community.